

Castillo de San Marcos

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Castillo de San Marcos
National Monument



Guardian of History: A Teacher's Guide to the Castillo de San Marcos

Saint Augustine is the oldest permanent European settlement in North America. The city was established in 1565 to protect the sea routes and prevent French and English expansion. The Castillo de San Marcos is, in turn, the oldest masonry fortification in North America. After nine wooden forts failed to adequately protect Saint Augustine, the Spanish Crown authorized the construction of a stone fortification in 1672. Since that time, the Castillo has withstood bombardments and hurricanes, only changing hands through treaty. Today, it is a guardian of our rich, shared history.



Welcome to the Castillo, Teachers! We hope that you will enjoy your visit to this guardian of Saint Augustine. We have developed this guide to help you and your class understand the fort and its story. This booklet will guide you on a journey through the Castillo and highlight the important events and places where they occurred.

As we have said before; the Castillo has withstood hurricane and siege. Today it also has to withstand the thousands of visitors who come to learn and enjoy. In order to ensure that this guardian continues to stand, we ask that you please follow these guidelines and share them with your students:

1. Please do not climb, sit, stand, or lean on the fragile shellstone walls and cannons (including those resting on the gundeck, rather than on a carriage).
2. No candy, chewing gum, food or drinks (except water) are allowed in the Castillo.
3. No smoking is allowed in the Castillo.
4. Please keep your group together and walk in an orderly manner, in a single file line.
5. Remember that sound carries. The acoustics of the Castillo amplify noise. Too much noise prevents other visitors and school groups from fully enjoying and learning from the Castillo. Please be courteous and do not interrupt other programs that may be occurring in the Castillo.
6. Public restrooms are located in the arch under the courtyard stairs. For the safety of your students, please have a chaperone or teacher in the restroom with the students.

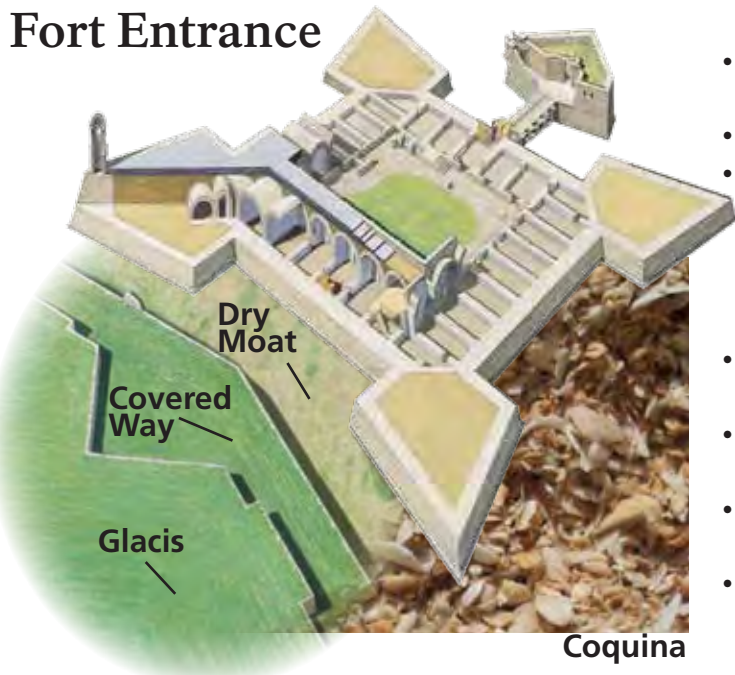
To make a reservation for an educational fee waiver, please call (904)829-3099.

Castillo's Guide Stops

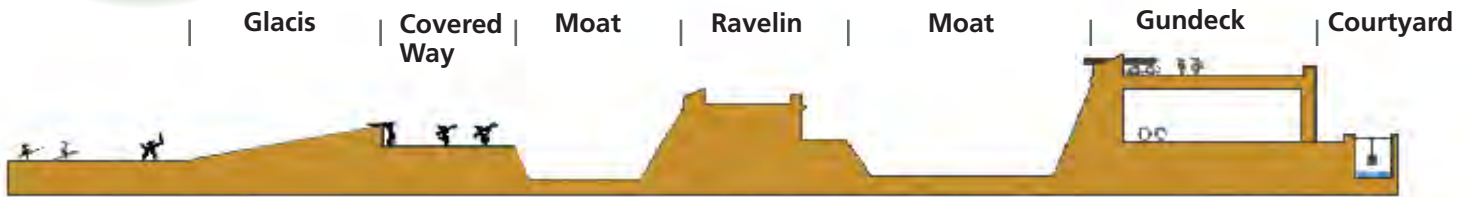
- ❶ Fort Entrance
- ❷ Drawbridges
- ❸ Ravelin
- ❹ Sallyport
- ❺ Spanish Guardrooms and Prison
- ❻ Courtyard and Well
- ❼ Officers' Quarters and First Chapel
- ❽ Provisions Room
- ❾ West Curtain Casemates
- ❿ North Curtain Casemates
- ⓫ East Curtain Casemates
- ⓬ Gundeck, Bastions and Garitas
- ⓭ Historic Weapons Demonstrations



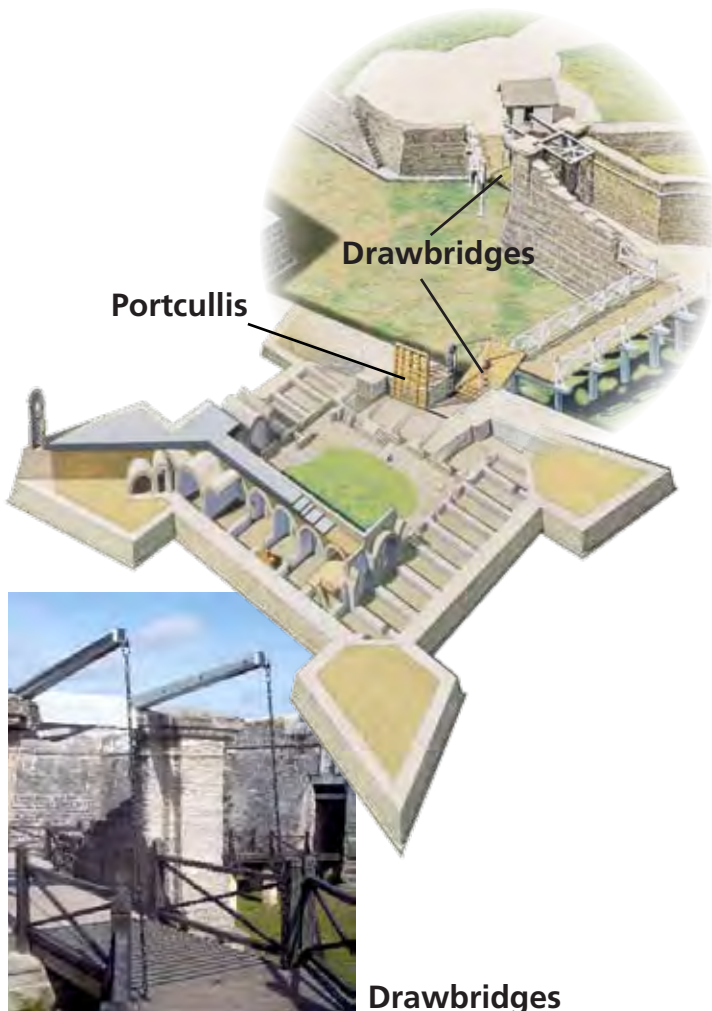
Fort Entrance



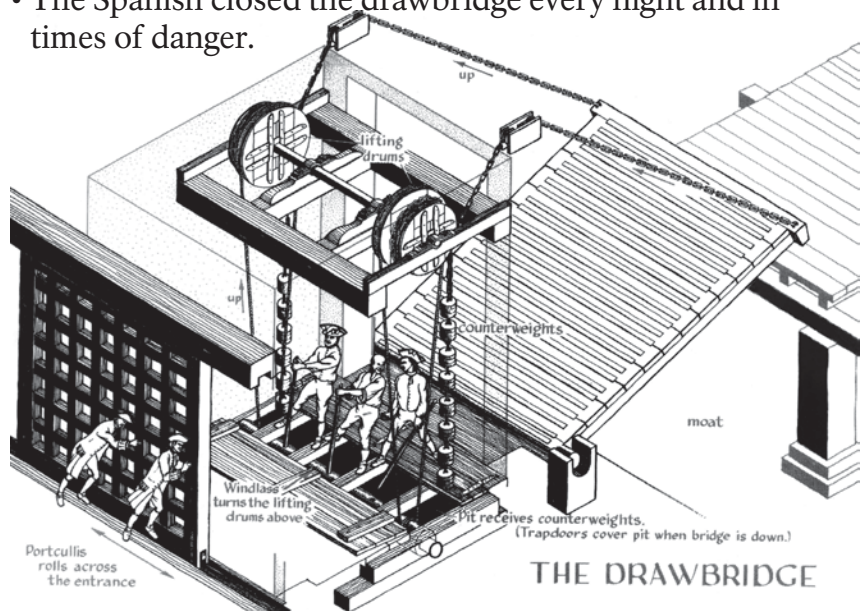
- The Castillo de San Marcos NM is the oldest masonry fortification in North America.
- The fort was built between 1672 and 1695.
- Materials: **Coquina** – fossilized crushed shell stone.
Mortar – lime (made from burnt oyster shells) mixed with sand and water.
Tabby – lime mortar with crushed oyster shells.
Argamasa – waterproof lime plaster.
- The fort was white with red towers, the same colors as the Spanish military flag.
- A **Dry Moat**, used for livestock during attacks, surrounded the fort.
- The hill around the fort was called the **Glacis** and protected the walls from direct artillery hits.
- The **Covered Way**, located between the glacis and the moat, allowed the soldiers to move around the fort and fire their muskets over the glacis without been seen.



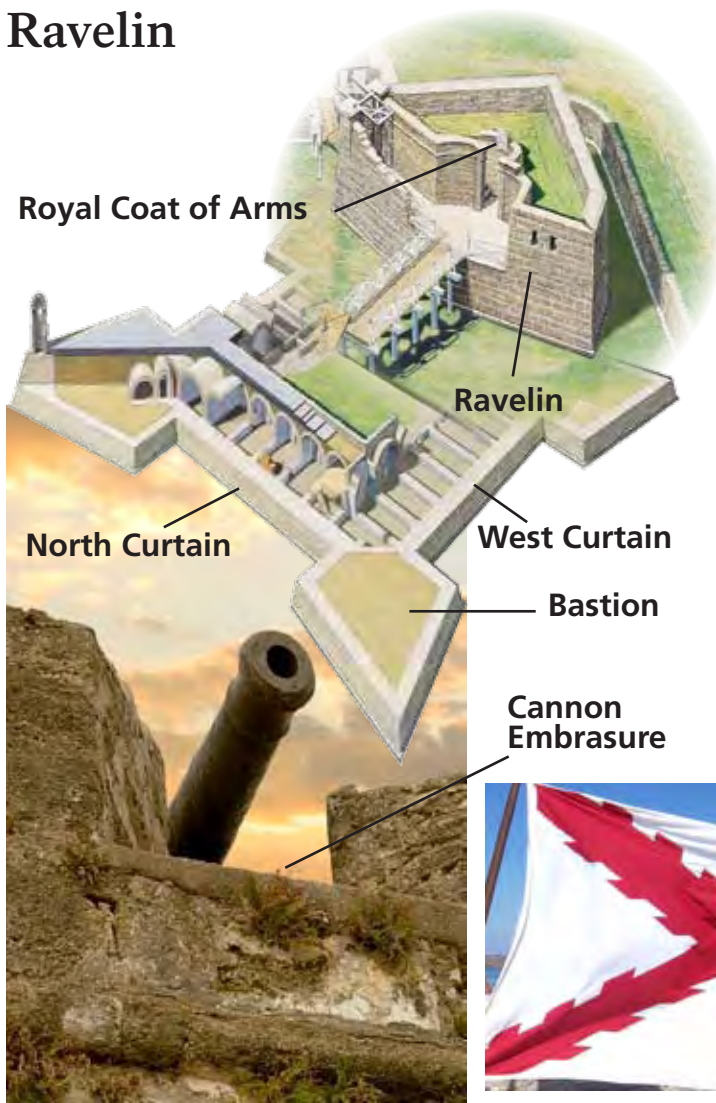
Drawbridges



- There are two **Drawbridges** in the fort. The first drawbridge blocks the way to the ravelin. The second drawbridge blocks the only way into the main fort.
- It took approximately 15 minutes to close the second drawbridge. This made it the most vulnerable area of the fort.
- The second drawbridge required five soldiers to operate. Three worked with the 1,800-pound counterweights and two rolled the **Portcullis**.
- The mechanism is a windlass (a lifting machine consisting of a cylinder wound with chains and turned by a crank) that lay beneath a trapdoor.
- The Spanish closed the drawbridge every night and in times of danger.



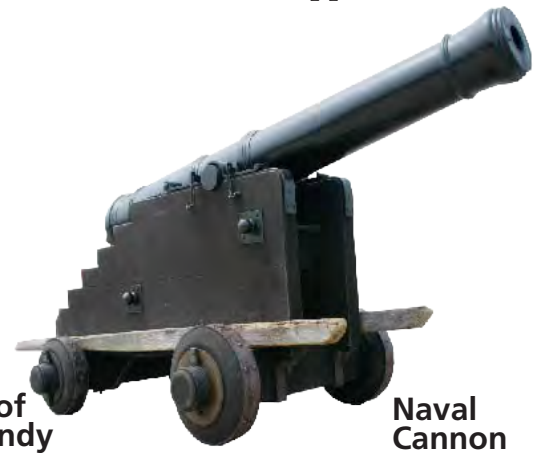
Ravelin



- The small, pentagonal fortification that connects the first and second drawbridges is the **Ravelin**.
- The ravelin covers the only entrance to the main fort. This protects the weakest section of the Castillo from direct fire.
- The **Royal Coat of Arms** at the entrance of the stairway is an acrylic replica. The original is exhibited inside the fort.
- The original ravelin was slightly smaller and finished in 1682.
- The fort's flag is the **Cross of Burgundy**, from the House of Burgundy in France. It was used as the Spanish military flag from 1505 to 1785.
- The wall behind the ravelin with the fort entrance and cannons on the top is the south curtain wall. The two diamonds on opposite sides are **Bastions**. There are four **Curtain** walls and four bastions.
- The cannons, located in **Cannon Embrasures**, provided a crossfire covering the field in front of the opposite bastion without blind spots.

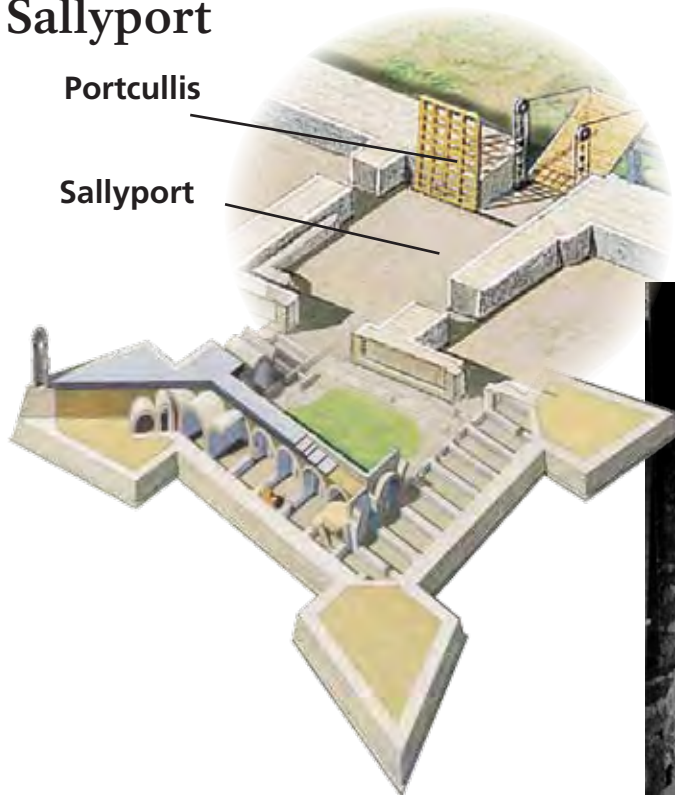


Cross of Burgundy



Naval Cannon

Sallyport



- The **Sallyport**, located in the south curtain of the fort, is the only way in or out of the Castillo.
- The sallyport connects to the right with the Spanish guardrooms and to the north with the central courtyard.
- The door to the left leads to the bookstore, which was originally the officers' quarters.
- The gate by the main drawbridge inside the sallyport is the **Portcullis**. In case of an emergency, two soldiers could close the portcullis to block the way and shoot at the enemy through the door at the same time. This door compensates for the slow mechanism of the drawbridge.

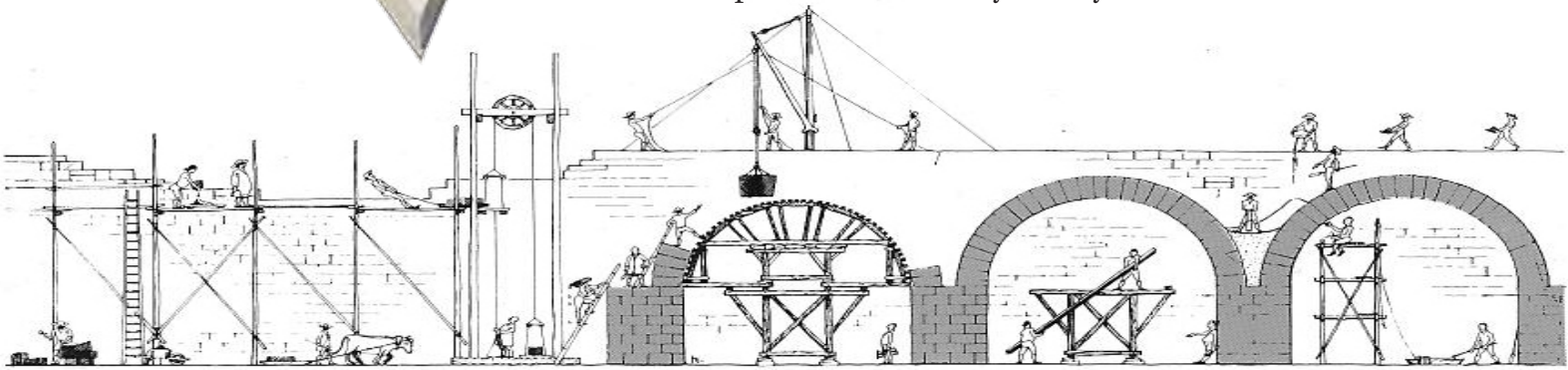


19th Century Door.
US Army replaced in 1959.

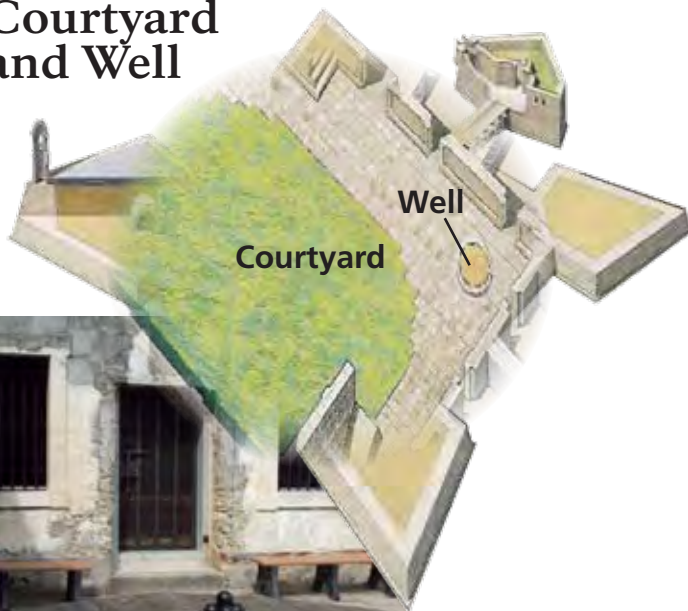
Spanish Guardrooms and Prison



- By 1756, rooms with vaulted ceilings replaced the wooden roofed rooms to support heavy cannons on the gundeck.
- The Spanish soldiers lived in town with their families and worked in the fort on 24 to 48 hour shifts. No one lived inside the fort. Soldiers on duty rested in the **Guardrooms**.
- No more than 40 soldiers were assigned on each duty.
- Their beds were located on one side of the room. You can observe the big, square holes on the right wall where the original beds were built.
- The small beds were designed in a way so that the soldiers did not sleep flat on their backs, preventing any breathing diseases. Their mattresses were stuffed with Spanish moss that hangs from the trees.
- There were three fireplaces inside the Castillo: one for each guardroom and one in the officers' quarters. Soldiers used them for a light source at night, to stay warm during the winter months, and to cook their meals.
- The locked door with two small windows is the **Prison**. A dark room with no windows for ventilation was the perfect punishment for any unruly soldier.



Courtyard and Well

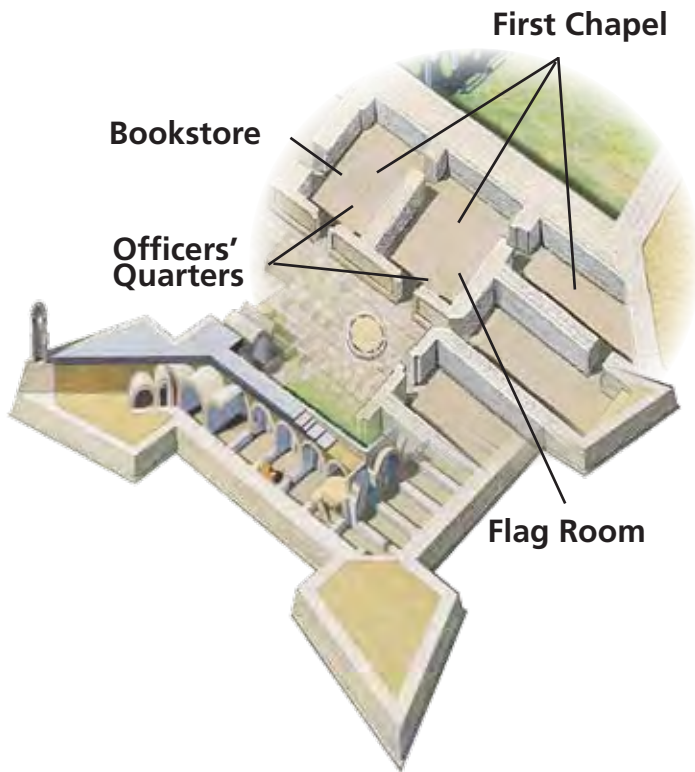


- The central open area inside the fort walls is the *plaza de armas*, or **Courtyard**.
- The rooms surrounding the courtyard had thick wooden doors with bars in opposite directions and double locks.
- Most of the rooms, with a few exceptions, were storage rooms for supplies needed to survive an attack.
- Originally, two straight ramps connected the plaza with the top level, allowing soldiers to move cannons to the gundeck.
- Three wells originally provided water.
- The construction of the vaulted rooms reduced the number of ramps to one.
- The town's people took refuge in the courtyard during attacks. No animals were allowed inside the fort.
- Only one **Well** remains in the courtyard's southwest corner. This well still has about three feet of water in it and a replica cover from the 1800s.
- Soldiers' military drills and inspections were performed in this open area, which originally had a sandy dirt floor.

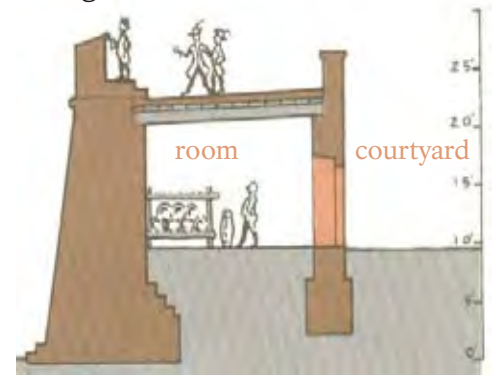


Well

Officers' Quarters and First Chapel

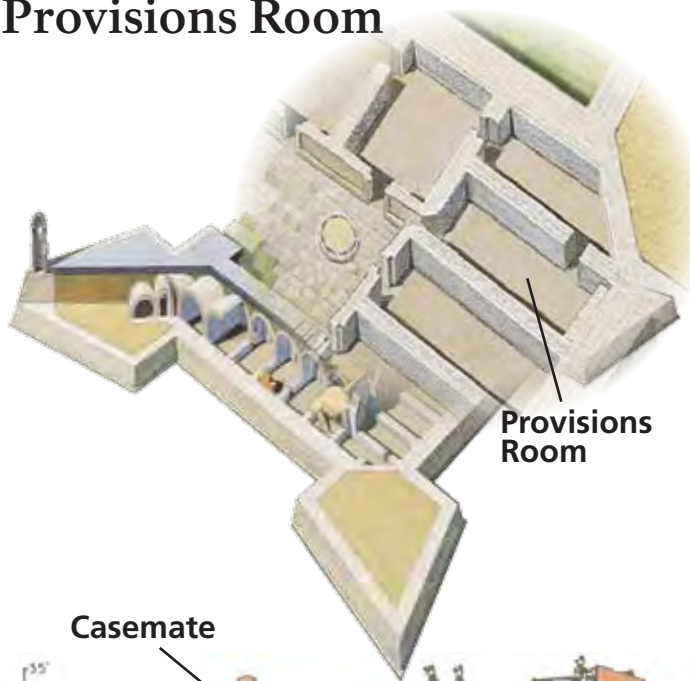


- The **Officers' Quarters** and the **First Chapel** of the fort were located near the well.
- The **Flag Room** and the **Bookstore** were one big chapel, and the sacristy was in the room with the big block of coquina.
- In 1737, the sacristy was smaller with a small door that accessed the chapel altar.
- By 1756, two new vaulted rooms split the chapel into the officers' quarters connected by a small door, which is now sealed.
- The "flag room" exhibits the six flags that flew over Saint Augustine, a timeline of important events, swords and a good aerial picture of the Castillo.
- Exhibits with the nine wooden forts that preceded the Castillo, the original coat of arms from the ravelin, and the old door from the American period are good visual aids for children.



1686 Rooms Design

Provisions Room



- The elevated area at the back of the **Provisions Room** shows the original width of the old rooms and gundeck. The walls were as high as the flat top level under the window.
- The original roof consisted of a deck of thick teak boards placed on top of the beams, covered with a tabby surface over an earth fill.
- In 1704, it was suggested to vault the rooms of the Castillo in order to prevent the gundeck from collapsing. Walls were raised from 20ft to 33ft. These vaulted rooms, or **Casemates**, were expanded toward the courtyard.
- This west curtain of the fort has windows on the back walls to provide proper ventilation for the provision rooms.
- The map of the sea routes of Spain helps you to discuss the importance of Saint Augustine. The control of the Gulf Stream was vital for the trade with the Spanish fleet base in Cuba.



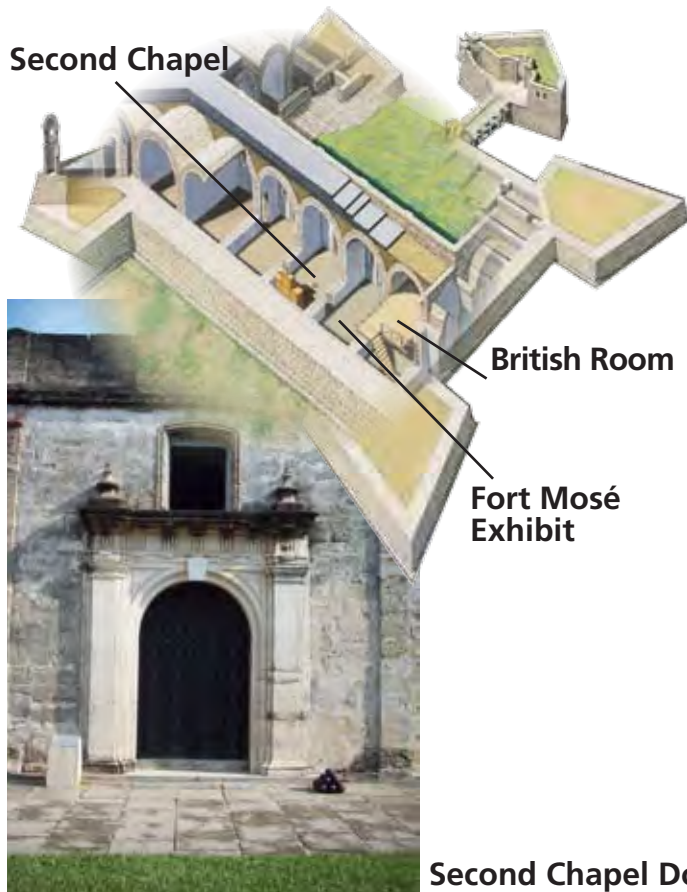
THE 1740 PROFILE

West Curtain Casemates



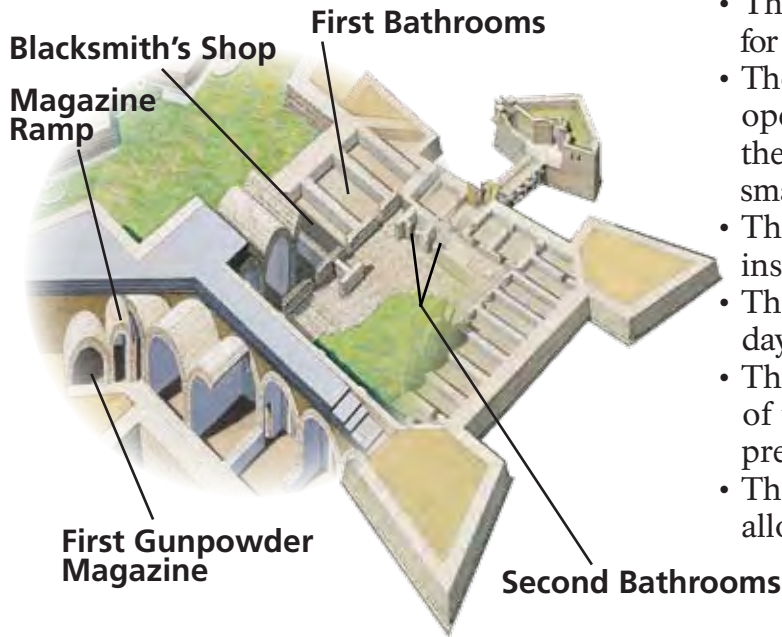
- After the fort was finished in 1695, the room in front of the well was the **Lieutenant Governor's Quarters**.
- Most of the west curtain rooms were transformed into **Provisions Rooms**. Materials like salt and dried food were stored in barrels and sacks.
- The door in this room is a good replica of the doors after 1784, when bars in the windows and secure doors were installed to protect the supplies.
- The door was made of heavy wood with a grid of iron bars across it. This prevented anyone from burning the door to get through. It was secured with a double lock; one was part of the door mechanism and the second one was a sliding bolt on top of it.
- The **Siege Room** discusses the two main British attacks on Saint Augustine with maps and comparison charts from both sides.
- The **Theater** presents a movie with the cannon and musket drills that is approximately 17 minutes long. This is a good alternative for students who are unable to go upstairs while their group visits the gundeck.
- The small door next to the theater leads to the **Second Gunpowder Magazine**.

North Curtain Casemates



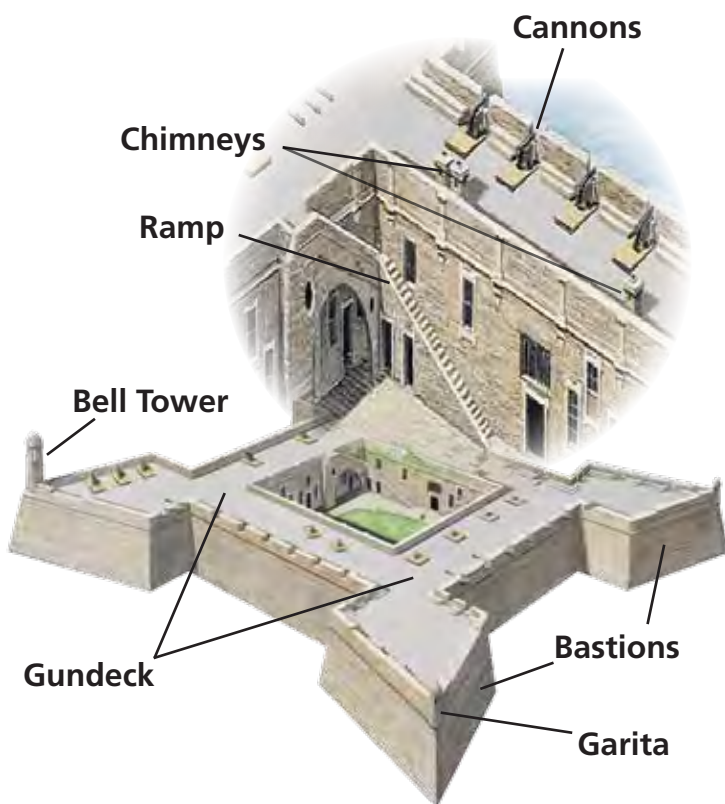
- This north curtain of the fort consisted in 1737 of two large rectangular storage rooms.
- The British controlled Florida from 1763 to 1784 gaining it with the Treaty of Paris. They were the first group to use the fort as living quarters. The **British Room** shows the loft built for more space.
- The fort's name was changed to Fort St. Marks during the American Revolution.
- General Christopher Gadsden, Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina, spent 42 weeks imprisoned in the fort's jail cell.
- Three signers of the Declaration of Independence, Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward Jr. and Arthur Middleton were imprisoned in Saint Augustine under house arrest.
- **Fort Mosé** was the first free black settlement in the Continental United States. The fort was located 2 miles north of Saint Augustine and the park is open for school groups under a reservation system.
- The **Second Chapel** of the Castillo was built after the vaulted room renovations.

East Curtain Casemates



- The northeast corner of the ground floor has rooms used for the storage of guns and ammunition in the early years.
- The small, rectangular room had a **Magazine Ramp** with an opening to the gundeck to move the gunpowder quickly to the cannons. It was also the only source of light for the small, dark **Gunpowder Magazine**.
- The first gunpowder magazine was the only room built inside a bastion.
- The **Blacksmith's Shop** was located at the site of the present-day women's restroom.
- The small rooms under the stairs are the **Second Bathrooms** of the fort. The **First Bathrooms** were located in the present-day men's restroom.
- The latrine was connected to the bay through a pipe that allowed tidal water to flush the toilets.

Gundeck, Bastions and Garitas



- The upper platform where the cannons are located is the **Gundeck**, also known as the terreplein.
- The three block-shaped formations on the south curtain, adjacent to the ramp wall, are the **Chimneys** of the Spanish guardrooms and officers' quarters.
- The **Cannon Embrasures** have slight angles that allowed the Spanish soldiers to position the cannons on their needed directions, covering the surrounding area as far as 3.7 miles.
- The iron and bronze **Cannons** are mounted on heavy garrison carriages, which prevented the cannons from recoiling too far, eliminating the need for rope tackle.
- The **Bastions** are the four-sided, diamond-shaped structures on each corner of the fort. Their shape allowed fire from any direction and protected their opposite bastions.
- The **Bell Tower** on the San Carlos bastion was the highest tower of the fort, from where the sentinels communicated with shoreline patrols and could alert the town of any danger.
- The remaining bastions had **Garitas**, or small sentry boxes. The garitas protected soldiers on guard duty from the weather and from enemy fire while still allowing them a wide view of the area.
- Looking over the harbor, you will find Anastasia Island, from where the Spanish quarried the Coquina stone for the construction of the fort.
- The Army Corps of Engineers designed today's harbor entrance. The original was near the lighthouse, forcing the vessels into a shallow and curved entrance to Saint Augustine and turning Anastasia Island into a natural line of defense.



**Historic Weapons Demonstrations
Friday - Saturday - Sunday**

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™